

Message Text

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13-12

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /071 W

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R 301526Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8584

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGOV, :INT, ELAB, UK

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT MOTION ON UNEMPLOYMENT CARRIES

REFERENCE: LONDON 1325

1. THE BITTER AND RECRIMINATORY DEBATE ON UNEMPLOYMENT
(REFTEL) CONCLUDED JANUARY 29 WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S MO-

TION CARRYING BY A VERY COMFORTABLE MAJORITY (234 TO 25),

AS FIFTY LABOR BACKBENCHERS JOINED THE CONSERVATIVES IN

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ABSTAINING. THE LIBERALS VOTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT.
TORY AMENDMENT CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE WAS

DEFEATED EARLIER BY 25-VOTE MARGIN. DISSIDENT MEMBERS OF TRIBUNE GRMUP, WHOSE OWN MOTION (REFTEL) WAS NOT CALLED, JOINED GOVERNMENT ON THIS VOTE.

2. CHANCELLOR HEALEY OPENED DEBATE BY PROMISING FURTHER MEASURES IN MID-FEBRUARY TO CUSHION UNEMPLOYMENT (SEE SEPTEL FOR DETAILS) AND FIRMLY REJECTED DEMANDS OF LABOR LEFT-WINGERS FOR "CONTROLLED REFLATION" AND SELECTIVE IMPORT CONTROLS. TORY SPOKESMAN JOHN NOTT SCORED GOVERNMENT FOR SUBSIDISING INEFFICIENT INDUSTRIES, STIFLING FREE MARKET WITH BUREAUCRACY AND EXCESSIVE PUBLIC BORROWING. HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT CONSERVATIVE PRESCRIPTION FOR BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC ILLS -- TAX CUTS, DRASTICALLY REDUCED PUBLIC SPENDING AND INVESTMENT INCENTIVES -- WOULD NOT IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT PICTURE IN NEAR TERM.

3. COMMENT: OUTCOME OF DEBATE AGAIN ILLUSTRATES CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION'S UNWILLINGNESS TO CONFRONT THE GOVERNMENT IN A SERIOUS FASHION -- THE TORIES SIMPLY WILL NOT TAKE AN ACTION WHICH MIGHT FORCE A GENERAL ELECTION. HAD THE TORIES VOTED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT ON THE MAIN MOTION, ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT WHIP'S OFFICE, IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT ENOUGH LABOR BACKBENCHERS WOULD HAVE ABSTAINED TO ASSURE GOVERNMENT'S DEFEAT. AS IT WAS, LABOR DISSIDENTS DEFIED PARLIAMENTARY CONVENTION OF CLEARING CHAMBER, REMAINING SEATED DURING DIVISION PROCESS.

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